

February 2, 2017



Dear Members of the UNM Community,

I write today regarding the executive order entitled "[Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States](#)," signed by the US President on January 27, 2017. I want to tell you what we are doing to help those affected by the order. I also want to describe our efforts to assist our undocumented students and reiterate this institution's position regarding lawful support and protection of our community members, regardless of their national origin or immigration status.

The executive order imposes restrictions on travel to the United States by the citizens of seven countries and places restrictions on the admission of refugees to the US. This order has had an immediate effect on some of our fellow students, faculty, and staff and has created significant anxiety for many others and their families. In addition to our human concern for the safety and welfare of those affected, UNM has institutional concerns about how this measure affects our educational mission. We are continuously evaluating the impact of the order and have already communicated with everyone associated with UNM whom we can identify as potentially affected. The Global Education Office (GEO) has [advised students](#) from the seven countries to consult an advisor in GEO before making any plans to travel outside of the US. GEO staff members have also communicated with those currently outside of the US in order to inform them and assist them.

UNM has also been following changes in the federal immigration laws as they affect our students, particularly those identified as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students. DACA was designed to protect from deportation undocumented young people raised in the United States. As you may know, Senators Lindsey Graham, Dick Durbin, Lisa Murkowski, Dianne Feinstein, Jeff Flake and Chuck Schumer and Representatives Mike Coffman and Luis Gutiérrez introduced the [BRIDGE Act](#). This bipartisan, bicameral bill would extend fairness to young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children by offering them a "provisional protected status" from deportation and providing work authorization. On behalf of UNM, I have joined many university presidents in co-signing the letters sent by the American Council on Education ([ACE](#)), the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities ([APLU](#)) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities ([HACU](#)) in support of the BRIDGE Act.

The APLU statement says, in part:

"Because of the uncertain future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, many undocumented university students are left in an untenable situation through no fault of their own. Those who applied for DACA status came forward and in good faith provided their information to the U.S. government based on a promise they would be protected. Regardless of one's view of the executive action at the time it was issued, the United States should be fair to these young people. This is the right thing to do."

In the meantime, various UNM offices and individuals have been active in assisting our undocumented students. Contributors include student groups, such as the Immigration Law Students Association, faculty/staff initiatives such as the UNM Sanctuary Working Group, and UNM programs such as the Admissions/Financial Aid team that provides financial aid counseling to our undocumented students. Other internal and external resources are coordinated through student services, in particular [El Centro de La Raza](#). Many of these initiatives have been communicated to those affected through the appropriate office. We are also compiling a full listing of available resources that will be posted in the UNM Newsroom.

As an institution, UNM will do all it can to support and protect members of our community who may be vulnerable to deportation or to exclusion from any of the rights and benefits we cherish. We are richer and stronger because of our many foreign-born students, staff, and faculty—and I am proud to be one of them. I remind you that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution affords every American citizen fundamental rights that help us as individuals to speak truth to power on behalf of those who cannot. I urge you to let everyone on campus know, especially those most affected by the recent events, that they belong with us. We remember who we are. Protect the Pack!

Chaouki Abdallah
Acting President